

REMARKS

Claims 1-39 are pending in the above-identified application. Claims 1-39 were rejected. With this Amendment, claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 33, 34, 36 and 38 were amended. Accordingly, claims 1-39 remain at issue.

Except as otherwise noted in this Amendment, the purpose of amending the claims is to eliminate grammatical or cosmetic errors such that the claims have not been amended to overcome any comment, objection, rejection, or other Office Action item presented by the Examiner.

Applicants submit that the specification has been amended to correct minor errors and to clearly identify that the disclosed methods for entry and editing of the spreadsheet formulas are performed in a computer system or apparatus consistent with the present invention. In particular, Applicants have amended the specification to clearly indicate that the Determiner 740 tool, and not a user, performs the following disclosed and claimed method steps, among others:

“determining whether a reference to [a selected] second cell conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry into a [spreadsheet] formula associated with [a] first cell; and
when it is determined that the reference to the second cell does not conform to the predetermined syntax,
storing the formula in the first cell; and
activating the second cell.”

Applicants submit that the original specification and figures support that the “Determiner 740 is used to determine whether it is appropriate to insert a reference to the second cell in the formula” associated with a first cell. *See* Original Application at pg. 18, lines 24-25. Applicants teach that the Determiner 740 may “comprise a computer program or other logic within the computing device” as shown in Figures 6 and 7 for performing the processes disclosed in Figures

3 and 5. *See* Original Application at pg. 18, lines 24-27; pg. 21, lines 25-27; *see also* Original Application at pg. 12, line 4 - pg. 13, line 22; pg. 16, line 1 - pg. 17, line 25 and corresponding amended paragraphs herein. Applicants further submit that the original specification clearly identifies that the disclosed process step of “determining whether it is appropriate to insert a reference to the [selected second] cell spreadsheet formula in the first cell” indicates whether the reference to the second cell conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry in the formula associated with the first cell in the spreadsheet. *See* Original Application at pg. 12, line 26 - pg. 13, line 2; pg. 13, line 26 - pg. 14, line 16; pg. 16, lines 23-27. Thus, no new matter has been introduced as the amendments to the specification are consistent with the application as originally disclosed in the figures and in the specification.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 112 Indefiniteness Rejection of Claims

Claims 1-39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being purportedly indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention. In particular, the Examiner argues that the claim terms “appropriate for entry” or “not appropriate for entry” are “unclear” and “open to interpretation.” Applicants respectfully disagree and traverse this rejection.

As discussed above, the specification clearly identifies that the terms “appropriate for entry” in context within the claims indicates a determination by the computer system that a reference to a selected second cell in a spreadsheet conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry in a formula associated with a first cell in the spreadsheet. *See* Original Application at pg. 12, line 26 - pg. 13, line 2; pg. 13, line 26 - pg. 14, line 16; pg. 16, lines 23-27. However, to further

prosecution, Applicants have amended the claims to remove the term “appropriate for entry” and provide alternate terms that may be clearly interpreted within the plain language of the claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the indefiniteness rejection to the claims be withdrawn.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 101 Non-Subject Matter Rejection of Claims

Claims 1-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as purportedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. In particular, the Examiner argued that the combined limitations within each claim can be interpreted as a series of mental and/or manual steps that are directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Although Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejection, each independent 1, 8, 12, 14, 21, and 25 has been amended in accordance with the Examiner’s suggestion to read “A method in a computer system ...” or “A computer executable formula editor....” Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

III. 35 U.S.C. § 102 Anticipation Rejection of Claims

The Examiner rejected claims 1-39 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based upon a public use or sale of the invention by Microsoft Excel 2000 (hereinafter “Excel 2000”) copyrighted by Microsoft Corporation in 1999. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

With regard to independent claim 1 as amended, Applicants claim a method in a computer system for editing a spreadsheet formula that recites the following limitations, among others:

“determining whether a reference to said second cell conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry into a [spreadsheet] formula in said first cell;
when it is determined that a reference to said second cell conforms to a predetermined syntax,
storing said formula in said first cell; and
activating said second cell.”

Independent claims 8, 12, 14, 21, 25, 27, 34 and 38 as amended have similar limitations.

Applicants teach that by performing this spreadsheet formula editing method in a computer system a user does not have to explicitly terminate editing for the first cell in the spreadsheet before activating the second cell for editing. Thus, when N formulas are edited, methods and systems consistent with the present invention allow N-1 fewer actions by a user than prior art methods. *See* Original Application at pg. 11, lines 9-18.

In Excel 2000, after a user activates a cell and then selects a second cell, Excel 2000 does not determine whether a reference to the second cell conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry into a formula in the first cell as recited by claim 1, for example. Instead, Excel 2000 requires the user to explicitly terminate editing of the formula in the first cell by selecting a termination button (i.e., *See* “X” box on page 4 of Excel 2000 Figures). Thus, Excel 2000 requires an additional action by the user, which is a prior art problem addressed and solved by a system consistent with Applicants’ invention.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Excel 2000 does not teach all the limitations of independent claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 21, 25, 27, 34, and 38, and respectfully requests that the rejection to these claims be withdrawn.

Claims 2-7 depend from base claim 1. Claims 9-11 depend from base claim 8. Claim 13 depends from base claim 12. Claims 15-20 depend from base claim 14. Claims 22-24 depend

from base claim 21. Claim 26 depends from base claim 25. Claims 28-33 depend from base claim 27. Claims 35-37 depend from base claim 34. Claim 39 depends from base claim 38. Thus, each dependent claim should be deemed allowable for at least the same reasons as the base claim from which it depends.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all claims are allowable over the cited prior art, and respectfully requests early and favorable notification to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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